

accepted a short time before. The Swanns' pioneered several towns in Utah and finally located at Preston, Idaho, in 1884. Here she died on January 12, 1909.

Before her marriage Fanny Jones was employed as office assistant to a Doctor Davis. She was a serious-minded girl and became very interested in the work of the doctor. He in turn did all he could to teach her the healing art. She studied anatomy, sanitation, home care of the sick, and other like subjects from the books he gave her.

While crossing the plains in a wagon train, the cattle stampeded one night. A twelve-year-old girl sustained a broken leg in the melee. Mrs. Swann set the broken bone, left some of her furniture on the prairie to make a bed in the wagon for the injured girl, then walked the remainder of the way to the Valley. This was her first experience in bone setting, but not the last for she set many a broken limb.

A portion of the family garden was devoted to herbs. She went into the fields and mountains and gathered many kinds of plant materials from which she prepared her simple remedies. Babies were given concoctions of catnip, mint or kinnikinnick. Older patients got Indian root, yarrow, or quinine. Her grandson said he was quite sure he recovered from many a childhood sick spell just at the thought of taking some of his grandmother's medicines.

Her greatest service to her community was no doubt in the role of midwife. She attended the birth of over two thousand babies. Sometimes she would stay and do the housework as well as care for the mother and child. She visited the home several times after a baby was born to see that everything was done for the safety and comfort of her patient. The standard fee for this service was five dollars—when she got it.

Her personal influence in the sick room was remarkable. Pain seemed less intense when she was near. Even those who died faced the end with serenity and courage because of her faith.



## Pioneer Midwives

*Thy faith hath made thee whole.* — Matt. 9:22



**MIDWIFERY** is the practice of assisting in the bringing of a new life into the world and from the beginning of time until the last century women have performed this service at the time of birth. It is the natural instinct of women to relieve, if possible the suffering of other members of her sex. Those women who chose this profession were resourceful, patient, and compassionate, which attributes fitted them for the needed service to both mother and child.

Many of the women who practiced midwifery in Utah were trained in their native lands; some in medical schools or hospitals, others working under eminent physicians. But the majority of the medically-minded women were called and set apart by the presiding authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Thus, armed with this authority and the blessings of the Lord, they went forth and performed a marvelous work in the settlements. These women had access to the finest medical books published at that time, and from the early 1850's special training was given them in Salt Lake City. Later schools were established in the outlying settlements by the L.D.S. Relief Society.

According to the State Registration Office only two hundred and eight women were licensed to be midwives in Utah. The date of the first licensing was February 11, 1893, and the last license issued to a midwife was July 15, 1932. The following tribute to midwives was written by Dr. D. C. Budge of Logan:

*She calls no hour of the night or day her own  
Through heat and cold she goes her way alone,  
Here to bring some mortal into being,  
There to ease some soul that must be fleeing.*



*She listens earnestly to tales of grief,  
Forgets herself that she may give relief  
To bodies suffering or tortured minds,  
In service to all men, her pleasure finds.  
May God forever bless her with His grace,  
For now she's gone—oh, who will take her place?*

#### SET APART BY THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

Patty Bartlett Sessions was born in Bethel, Maine, February 4, 1795. She was married to *David Sessions* at the age of seventeen, and it was at this time that she commenced the practice of midwifery. Twenty-two years later she joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In 1836 she and her husband, who had been baptized a Mormon, left their home in Maine to join the gathering of the Church in Ohio. From there they moved to Missouri where they lost all they possessed when the Saints were driven from that state in 1838. Leaving the farm in the middle of winter, they stayed at one place along the road for fourteen days with nothing to eat but parched corn. Upon their arrival in Nauvoo, Illinois they made a comfortable home.

Patty was the mother of three children, David, Sylvia and Perrigrine. When she was fifty-two years of age she and her husband left Winter Quarters for the trek westward, arriving in Salt Lake City in 1847. Their first home was on the present site of the Union Pacific Railroad Station. Perrigrine and his family went north of the Old Fort in Salt Lake City where they founded the city of Bountiful, then called Sessions Settlement.

On August 11, 1850, Mr. Sessions passed away. Patty later became the wife of John Parry, but during all the years of her medical career she was known as Patty or "Mother Sessions." Although this great humanitarian work kept her exceedingly busy she found time to attend to the needs of her home and family. She skillfully accomplished all the tasks of a pioneer homemaker. Later she moved into a new home on the banks of City Creek at North Temple and Fourth West Streets where she resided until she moved to Bountiful, in 1872. There she built a fine brick home and later a schoolhouse called the "Patty Sessions Academy," where her grandchildren and the poor children of the locality were admitted without cost.

It is recorded that "Mothers Sessions" delivered 3,977 babies, one of the largest number of births attended by any woman in Utah Territory. Her son Perrigrine had seven wives and fifty-five children; David was the father of ten children, and Sylvia, four living children. Patty traveled to Bountiful when she was living in Salt Lake City to take care of the mothers of most of her grandchildren and some of her great grandchildren.

Mrs. Sessions entered many accounts in a day-book which shows that she made good money on her farm and orchards and they reveal interesting lights on the way in which she paid her tithes. Several times she gave funds for the purchase of oxen to bring the poor to Zion and help them when they arrived. She developed the Sessions plum, which is sold on the Utah market today. Her life span covered almost a century, for had she lived fifty-three more days she would have been ninety-nine years old. Her death occurred in Bountiful, Davis County, Utah December 14, 1893.

*Jane Johnston Black*, daughter of Daniel and Marietta Chambers Johnston, was born June 11, 1801, at Lombag, Antrum County, Ireland. Her father was a Wesleyan Methodist preacher. Jane's parents died when she was sixteen, then she was called to fill her father's place in the ministry which position she held until she was twenty. Before his death Mr. Johnston named William Black, Sr., his daughter's guardian, and Jane lived in the Black home until she married *William Black, Jr.*, July 31, 1822. The young couple made their home in Lisburn, Ireland. Jane became the mother of three sons and one daughter, *George, William, Joseph* and *Mary*. The family moved to Manchester, England, in 1835. It was here they heard of a newly organized church, called the Latter-day Saints and they were invited to go to a meeting to hear the missionaries preach. Following are Jane's own words:

"The meeting was held in Paul Harris's cellar and Elder William Clayton and Joseph Fielding addressed us and it was 'Tidings of Great Joy' to my husband and myself. We both believed in their teachings and on January 14, 1839 we were baptized by Elder William Clayton. Then in the year of 1840, we (mother and children) moved to Nauvoo and heard the Prophet Joseph Smith preach and I can testify that he was a prophet of God. We came to Nauvoo under the Council of the Authorities and left my husband on a two-year mission. We moved to Augusta and remained there until my husband came home in 1845. We then moved to Nauvoo again and remained there until the Saints were driven from there. My husband being in Canada at the time, I went with the Saints to Montrose before crossing the Mississippi River. A posse of the mob rode up and surrounded our wagons and demanded we give up our fire arms. I had a pistol in my bosom and I drew it out and told them 'Here is my pistol, but I will use it before I give it up.' They did not take it from me but threatened to throw me in the river that night. Then we were ferried across the Mississippi River into Iowa and remained there a short time. I buried what arms I had in a quilt in a hole under the wagon wheel. We had nothing to eat but a half bushel of corn meal and a half-dozen cucumbers that were given to me by Martin Littlewood. There were a great many sick among us and

many years. At one time she was president of the Primary organization and also served in the Mutual Improvement Association. Louisa's wise counsel was often sought by members of her community and many came to her for help with their personal problems. God in His wisdom saw fit to call "Aunt Louisa" home December 31, 1927.

— Mrs. Malcolm Ellington

*Sariah Susanne Garrard Blodget* was born February 4, 1832, at Diss, Norfolk, England, the daughter of Timothy and Susannah Everet Quantrille Garrard. She joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and with her mother, brothers and sister sailed for America on one of the Church chartered ships, docking in New Orleans harbor, then crossed the plains and arrived in Utah Territory, September 30, 1853. Sariah married Isaiah Campbell in February, 1854, whom she later divorced. In 1857 she married Green Blodget.

Sariah in her diary said: "My early life was spent in medical training in England. Later I was set apart by the Church authorities to care for the sick, the confinement of women and the care of babies. I spent over fifty years in this service. I confined hundreds of women and I did not lose a case. I have been on hand day or night, rain or shine to render assistance in relief of sickness." Mrs. Blodget passed away December 19, 1914, at the age of eighty-two years, leaving a husband, a large posterity and a host of friends.

— Alla Grace Jorgensen



## Pioneer Midwives

*By love serve one another.* Gal. 5:13



HIS CHAPTER is a continuation of the experiences dealing with the lives and accomplishments of women who gave of their time and talents in serving other women during childbirth. In most of the pioneer companies were some skilled in the art of midwifery and others who afterwards chose this profession as a means of livelihood. They were among the elect of Zion for they manifested great faith in the performance of their labors. Giving freely of her services each knew she was needed. Among these choice pioneers were women from the States, Australia, South Africa, Scandinavia, the British Isles and other countries.

While the Relief Society in the early days of Utah undertook the responsibility of thoroughly training women in obstetrics, the students also were instructed to be prepared to meet all the complications and emergencies of their career; to be honorable in keeping their appointments, always responding to the call of those who were ill. They were expected to be a comfort to the family of the afflicted. When called to the homes of the poor they were told "it was more blessed to minister to those who had not the means to help themselves than to wait upon the rich." A great majority of these women were set apart by the brethren holding the Priesthood and were promised great blessings if they would go forward in the spirit of the Master.

Later the Relief Society inaugurated a special school for nurses. Dr. Maggie C. Shipp Roberts was the principal teacher. The following instructions were given:

*Remember this movement was instituted especially to supply nurses for charity work and for those people who cannot afford to pay \$15 or \$25 a week, but who can pay, and want to pay, \$3, \$5 or \$6 a week. You are in honor bound to nurse for these prices whenever it is necessary*